

St Mary's Catholic High School, Leyland

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END OF SCHOOL YEAR LETTER 2021

July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week draws to a close a school year that once again has been disrupted considerably due to the pandemic. I would like to say thank you for the help you have given your children to get through it, and for the support you have offered the school and its staff during this challenging time.

Special mention must go to our wonderful pupils who have once again shown resilience and perseverance in the face of all that has happened. They are a special group of young people and deserve great credit for the spirit they have shown.

School re-opening and Lateral Flow Tests

As we know, the government has signalled that all legal restrictions regarding Covid-19 will be lifted in England from July 19. Even so, there are still certain expectations being placed upon secondary schools from September which will affect your child.

Schools are being asked once again to conduct two lateral flow tests for pupils on their return. For all returning pupils, this is something that they are comfortable with, having done the same on our return from lockdown in March.

I am conscious that for our new starters in Year 7, this may be a new experience. In addition, they have been unable to take part in any new school induction process. Therefore, Year 7 will be starting high school on Thursday 2 September. All other year groups, will be asked to return to classes on Monday 6 September.

However, to enable 2 lateral flow tests to be conducted with minimal disruption to classes, Years 8-11 must visit school to conduct their first test on the following days and at the following times:

Year 11	Thursday 2 September	1pm-3pm
Year 8	Friday 3 September	8.30-10.30am
Year 9	Friday 3 September	11am-1pm
Year 10	Friday 3 September	1.30-3.30pm

Pupils will not receive an appointment time, as tests will be conducted on a first come, first served basis, but it is vital that pupils arrive within the allocated timeslots for their year group. Pupils be required to wait 15 minutes for their result. School will contact home ONLY if your child returns a positive test. In addition, pupils need not wear school uniform. Tests will once again be conducted in the Sports Hall, with the entrance, as in March, being the furthest gate to the right as you look at school.

By conducting the tests this way, this means that all pupils will be in school, ready for lessons, from Monday 6 September.

School must have consent from parents and carers before we can conduct the tests. However, many parents gave their consent for testing back in March – this consent still stands, so you do not need to re-complete the form. Approximately 98% of parents gave consent last time. If anybody has changed their mind since then, or your child has joined St Mary's recently, then the consent form, and further information, can be found at the bottom of the following webpage: <https://www.ismchs.com/news/2021-07-12-september-2021>

Public Health Requirements

Whilst the wearing of face masks will no longer be required in schools, I understand that some of our school community may be a little hesitant as we come out of the Covid pandemic. Therefore, if your child would feel more comfortable wearing a face mask when moving around school or in class, then they will be able to do so. We will review this as the school year progresses.

Similarly, the government is keen to stress that sensible hand hygiene and good ventilation is still recommended. With this in mind, we will still offer pupils regular opportunities for using hand sanitizer, and for doors and windows to be open.

Uniform

As you are aware, St Mary's has high expectations for all pupils in terms of uniform and appearance and, as you would expect, these expectations will be in force from the first day of the autumn term. This includes, amongst other things, no make-up/false tan, no extreme haircuts, no jewellery, black shoes (no trainers) and blazers. Jumpers will only be required from October half-term.

Smart Watches

Smart watches will no longer be permitted from September. These will be regarded as an electronic device and subject to confiscation. There are good reasons for this. Firstly, we have long had a ban on mobile phones but technology now allows for smart watches to be used in very similar ways to phones. Secondly, it has recently been announced that all watches will be banned from public exams from next year, therefore it is sensible for pupils to get used to working without a watch. For clarity, St Mary's would regard any watch as a smart watch if it has the ability to link to a mobile phone, access apps, or connect to the internet.

The School Day

Year group bubbles are no longer required in secondary schools. Therefore, we have greater flexibility in arranging the school day. However, we have decided to keep one of the changes we introduced last year, and this is our split breaks and lunch. This means that at both break and lunchtime, Years 7, 8 and 9 will mix together, with Years 10 and 11 having their breaks at a different time. This will allow for less crowding in the dining hall, with shorter queue times and more available seating. From September, your child's school day will look as follows:

<u>The School Day</u>			
<u>Years 7, 8 & 9</u>	08:30am Staff Briefing 08.40am Movement Bell	<u>Years 10 & 11</u>	08:30am Staff Briefing 08.40am Movement Bell
8.45-9.00am	Form	8.45-9.00am	Form
9-10am	P1	9-10am	P1
10-10.20am	Break	10-11am	P2
10.20-11.20am	P2	11-11.20am	Break
11.20am-12.20pm	P3	11.20am-12.20pm	P3
12.20-12.55pm	Lunch	12.20-1.20pm	P4
12.55-1.55pm	P4	1.20-1.55pm	Lunch
1.55pm	Movement Bell	1.55pm	Movement Bell
2-3pm	P5	2-3pm	P5

In addition, each year group will retain its own entrance into school in the morning. The only change to this year will be our current year 7 who will move from the main yard and now gather outside the entrance to Music. Staff will again be present in hi-vis jackets to guide pupils to their correct entrances.

Travelling to School

If you are intending to drop off or pick up your child, be aware that Royal Avenue can get extremely busy. Please consider stopping your car so that your child has a short walk to school, rather than directly outside the school gate, and be considerate of our neighbours in the local area.

If travelling on public transport, please discuss with your child the fact that some bus companies may still ask that face masks are worn. Please make sure your child is well-prepared for this.

It is always best when your child walks or cycles to school, but please remember that cycle helmets are compulsory for St Mary's cyclists.

Staffing Information

This term we say goodbye to a number of staff. We thank the Cover Supervisors Miss Bandy and Miss Pugh, one of our Year 7 TA's Mrs Meldrum and our Site Supervisor Mr Cusack for their service to the school. I'm sure you will join me in wishing them well with their future away from St Mary's.

As the school continues to grow, we will be welcoming new staff in September. We welcome back ex-pupil Mr Booth who joins the PE department. In Science and Maths, Dr. Tyrer and Miss Porter respectively, join us to cover for maternity posts. Mrs Graham and Mrs McMahon will both join the SEND department as TA's, whilst Miss Wyeth will join as a Cover Supervisor. Mrs Shelley will also make the move from TA to Cover Supervisor from September.

Building Works

During the summer holidays, work will begin on refurbishing the top floor of the Mercer block. With luck, this work will be completed by October half-term, meaning that we return to once again having all parts of the school building being used for the pupils. In addition, the school is having an upgrade on its fire alarm system. The works will be quite intrusive, but will be of great benefit to the school in the long-run.

Consultation on exams for 2022


Parents of current Year 10 pupils may well be interested to know that a set of consultations have been launched by the Department for Education regarding proposals for exams and assessments 2022. All parents are invited to offer their views on exams for the 2021-22 season, and further details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/proposals-set-out-for-exams-and-assessments-in-2022>

Positive Covid Cases

If your child develops symptoms, or has a positive lateral flow test in the summer holidays they should go for a confirmatory PCR test. If the result is positive, up until Sunday 18 July, please let school know on this email address: c19@ismchs.com. After this date, Inform NHS Track and Trace at <https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk> or phone 111.

This year, school closes at 12.30pm for all children on Friday 16 July. I thank you again for the support you have offered school, wish you all an enjoyable and restful summer, and look forward to welcoming your children back in September.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Thompson

Headteacher